

Hand of God, Deliver Me by theproblematicgay

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Summary:

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Steve had nearly fucking *died*. Billy still couldn't wrap his head around that. What if he had? What is Billy supposed to do when he is gone – when he decides he's had enough, when he meets some girl, or that Nancy chick decides to come running back? Billy knows he's still hung up on her, and he sees it every day that he could never be enough for him, just like how Harrington could never fill that void in him. How could he?

Or, Harrington's gaggle of little shits are more perceptive than Billy would've ever guessed, 'cause he'd thought he and Steve had at least been *subtle* about it.

Hand of God, Deliver Me

Author's Note:

‘and the arms of the ocean are carrying me, and all this devotion was rushing out of me, and the crashes are heaven for a sinner like me – the arms of the ocean deliver me.’

– *Florence + the Machine*

And, disclaimer, no, I don't own anything.

Also, I have a tumblr now, same name and all – do what you will with that information.

PREVIOUSLY – FEB 1985:

Steve slept like the dead. Billy watches as he turns his face into the pillow, mouth open a little, and God, he wishes he had a camera.

There are strings of Christmas lights still up in Steve's room even though it's been about two months since that holiday had died and Billy had laughed at first, offered to help Steve take them down, but they're familiar now. He liked how they painted Steve's face in a muted glow as he slept, the slow bursts of colour flaring red and green. He would miss it, he thinks.

Steve turns eighteen in a month and Billy doesn't know what to do anymore. He's tried to convince Steve to come with him after his birthday too many times now to bring it back up without starting another argument. Now, he's just savouring the time that's left, hoping Steve'll change his mind before Billy can't cope in this town anymore. Steve wants to fucking *stay*, wants Billy to stay, but Hawkins is Billy's idea of Hell. He's had the idea of leaving stuck in his head since he'd had to leave California; it had been the only thing keeping him from drowning himself in a goddamn puddle at more than one point.

It was only ever meant to be a casual thing, the thing that they'd had

going, but Billy had just had to fuck it up by kissing him, fucking it up more when he hadn't stopped. He'd fucked them both over, and he doesn't really know whether he regrets it or not, if he's honest.

MAY 1985

Steve is sat on the floor of his living room with his fingers tangled in the rug, giggling as though he's petting a tiger. "Billy," he breathes, voice light with amazement. "It's so *soft*."

Billy rolls his eyes. "Yeah, okay, Harrington."

He'd had to stop Steve from crawling into the fireplace three times. He's just glad he's distracted by the rug now rather than the flames.

"Feel," he urges, patting the ground insistently until Billy reaches a hand down to sweep his palm across the rug before Harrington gave them both a headache.

They're both a little high. Billy had offered as soon as practice had ended, knowing they could probably both do with something to take the edge off of everything nowadays, after everything that had happened. It's nice to not think for a while, to not have his mind eventually trail back to the tunnels beneath Hawkins, what he'd found in them, the look on Hopper's face, how sick Steve'd been afterward. He figures it's gotta be nice for Steve too, considering that he'd been the one stuck down there. Billy sometimes wonders, though he'd never asked, what Steve had seen down there, what he knew.

It's like a familiar embrace for Billy, a warmth that seeps through his ribs and burns the weight from inside his chest. Steve is less accustomed to the feeling. His pupils are blown, enough that his eyes seem almost black and his tongue keeps swiping across his lower lip, slick and bitten pink.

He'd choked on the smoke of the joint he'd been handed and Billy had laughed at the brownies he'd suggested instead, saying how good a housewife he'd make, (even if he couldn't help but outright *moan* after biting into one, but Steve didn't exactly complain, so) but this,

Steve entirely at ease, grinning absently and watching Billy with something akin to adoration in his eyes, it was more than worth it.

Billy turns his head where he's lying along the length of the sofa and smiles, watching Steve's head sway as though his neck can hardly support it, like a baby or a newborn kitten. At his chuckle Steve lifts his head to look at him and starts crawling toward the sofa, stopping every few seconds to stroke the rug with a giddy grin on his face.

Once he reaches Billy though, his smile falls. He reaches out and runs a fingertip across the curve of his cheekbone, below his lip, along his eyebrow. Gentle, barely even touching at all.

"I'm sorry you got hurt," he mumbles, frowning openly. It's similar to the expression Billy's seen on toddlers.

"Shut up, Harrington," he turns his head, hiding his face in the cushion. "Wasn't your fault."

Steve doesn't reply to that, and Billy's all of two seconds from turning back to face him when hesitant fingers begin to comb through his hair. He stiffens for a moment.

Steve's fingers twist through the strands, brushing against his scalp and eliminating any chance of Billy telling him to get off and quit it already. It's the most relaxed he's felt in a while.

"Your hair's pretty," Steve offers. "Like a girl's."

He reaches a hand out and grips the front of Harrington's shirt as he turns back to face him. "Is it really, now?" He tugs him forward until Steve gets with the program and clambers onto the sofa, onto Billy. "My hair might be pretty, but you're the pretty boy here, Harrington." He runs his hands along the warm skin under his shirt, nails raking lightly over his chest before pausing at the waistband of his shorts.

He looks at Steve from under his eyelashes, smiling a little lopsidedly as he shucks the shirt off and leans in to catch a nipple between his teeth. Steve moans, something obscene, and his hands clutch at Billy's own shirt, yanking it up to expose his stomach.

"God," Billy breathes, releasing the little nub to lick a slick stripe up the length of Steve's neck and bite at his jaw. "*C'mon*, Harrington." Billy's hands pull at his shorts and tug them down as much as he can with Steve sitting on him.

He urges him to kneel, knees either side of Billy's hips as he sits up to kiss at Steve's navel, directed by the hands in his hair. He shoves down the shorts further, halfway down his thighs where a smattering of freckles paint Steve's skin, paler than anywhere else and smooth, almost hairless. His nails gauge little pink crescents in his hips as they rock into his mouth, his lips and tongue laving over the skin, Steve hissing at the bite of drawn blood.

"Bi-Billy," he whimpers helplessly as the fingers at his hips begin to press into his back, trailing lower until Steve arches violently, crying out. "*Billy-*"

Billy draws his finger back and sucks on it for a moment before abruptly stopping when he has the better idea to push it into Steve's mouth instead. He frowns at the initial taste of the blood, *his* blood underneath Billy's nails but it doesn't take long for him to begin twisting his tongue around his fingertip, sucking hesitantly. It's not a minute later that Billy's worked it inside of him, drawing mewls and muted whines from him that only drive Billy to bite harder at whatever skin he can reach.

He works his way lower down Steve's body, pulling him closer until he's practically on his chest so he can mouth at the base of Steve's cock, dragging the flat of his tongue along the length of it before kissing the head wetly, licking delicately at the slit where a little pearl of precome has beaded. Steve lets out a ragged breath and for a moment it rattles in his chest, not unlike a wheeze or a sob. He almost yells when he crooks his finger before taking him into his mouth, swallowing around him.

"Billy," he cries, tears beginning to track down his cheeks. "Billy-fuck. I'm not-" Billy's teeth brush against the length of him and he stiffens. "I'm- I'm not gonna last," he pants, resistless.

Billy doesn't need him to. He releases him and sits up, pulling him down harshly into his lap so that Steve's face is level with his and he

can watch the pleasure twist his expression into something almost ethereal as he wraps a callused hand around his cock. Steve just moans helplessly, pressing his face into Billy's neck as he's worked to completion, come spilling over Billy's fingers.

He tangles his free hand into Steve's hair and wrenches him back, slotting their mouths together. He pulls away only to raise his hand and inspect the mess left there. Steve blushes impossibly, flushing down to his chest when Billy smears a droplet on his lower lip. He catches it with his tongue and the ache of Billy's cock flares up at the sight. He grabs Steve's shirt from where he'd abandoned it on the floor and wipes his hand relatively clean. Steve strips off his shorts the rest of the way, bared entirely.

Steve makes a face at that but pushes Billy so that he's lying down and flattens himself over him nonetheless, kissing at his jaw and catching his breath into his shirt.

"Were you just jealous?" Steve snickers, quiet and sluggish.

He tries to hide the smirk, burying it in Steve's hair. "Shut up, Harrington."

"If it's any consolation," Steve smiles into his neck, "your hair's softer than the rug."

Billy laughs unreservedly and shoves him to the floor. When he doesn't try to get back up he leans over the edge of the sofa to check he's alright and Steve smiles up at him, eyes glazed.

He grins, and it's unfamiliar, the lack of malicious intent in it, even though it had been months now. February had flown by, just as March had. April, they'd been content, satisfied with just getting high together, fucking whenever they could and fighting when they couldn't. Easy. The halcyon of Billy's fucking life.

He had a feeling May was going to be different. The last of the frost had disappeared despite the piercing temperatures in the early mornings. He couldn't wait for the heat of summer, despite the fact that he knew it wouldn't be anything like California.

He moves to sit by Steve's head, drawing his fingers through his hair

even though they're tacky where he'd haphazardly wiped them halfway-clean on Steve's shirt.

Steve moves closer so that his head rests partly on one of Billy's legs, close enough that he can look up at Billy's face and turn his face into his inner thigh. Without shifting from where he's laying on his back, he presses his mouth lightly over Billy's jeans where he's still hard. There's an unspoken question in his eyes when he glances back up at Billy to gauge his reaction.

Billy undoes the front of his jeans, pushing them down enough so that they're out of the way but would be easily pulled back up if needed. He palms himself through his boxers, aching. Steve only smiles, looking utterly fucked, the pinnacle of debauchery. At his whine, Billy pulls out his cock and thumbs the head, watching Steve lean up and catch a drop of precome that connects them as he lies back down, tongue swiping along his lower lip to break the string. He can't help but groan at the picture Steve makes like this.

He manoeuvres himself so that he can push past Steve's lips and into the irresistible warmth and slick of his mouth without suffocating him or have Steve strain himself in order to reach. Hands clutch desperately at his thighs, nails raking along the denim as he slides further in. Steve chokes, chest heaving once before he pulls back. He draws in a wrecked breath through his nose until Billy pushes forward again.

Billy loses himself in the feeling, head spinning, and he can't help himself when he reaches out to pinch at one of Steve's nipples, tugging harshly enough that he cries out around Billy's cock, hips driving up despite the fact that he can't get hard again. As he comes, he rakes long red streaks down Steve's chest with his nails, savouring the sound of his stuttered gasp.

He stays kneeling above him for a minute, just watching his chest rise and fall with each breath, the stretch of pale skin, the warmth in his eyes. It's something like Heaven.

It's broken by the telephone ringing from the kitchen, and the way Steve seems to snap out of the sedate haze that's settled over him.

Steve drags himself up to answer the phone. It's only a moment before he hears him from the kitchen: "Nance?"

Billy groans under his breath, throwing an arm up to cover his eyes.

"No, no, it's fine. Are you okay? Yeah, don't worry. What's up?"

Billy's pretty sure he must've fallen asleep when Steve's suddenly kicking at his side somewhat half-heartedly, mumbling something about his bed. He stays lying on the floor, staring up at him, knowing there's something in his eyes that Steve can damn well see for the look on his face until he's kicked at again.

"You comin' up?" He holds out a hand, tremors running through his fingers.

Billy takes it and stands with him for a minute before they start for the stairs. Once in his room, Steve rifles through his drawers for boxers as Billy strips off his jeans. He throws them haphazardly over the desk chair and turns to Steve.

"Who was that?" He already knows.

"Just Dustin being a shit," Steve shrugs nonchalantly, not meeting Billy's eye as his voice falls flat.

He nods, like he's an understanding person and, if anything, that should have given it away to Steve that he didn't buy his shit for a goddamn second, 'cause he *wasn't* an understanding person. "What'd he want?" He can feel the way his shoulders seem to broaden of their own accord, how he stands facing Steve like he's squaring off.

The thing about Steve is that he's an awful fucking liar. He watches him squirm for a moment before he makes eye contact, eyes screaming that he's desperately trying to think of something. "There's a girl he likes in his class and he won't shut up about-"

"Cut the shit, Harrington," he sighs, as if he's deflating. If Steve has gotten to know him the past few months, he'll know he's far from it.

His lips part, like he's thinking he knows what to say next, but nothing comes. He just stands there, waiting for Billy to kick off, start yelling, act like he's gonna hit him all of a sudden, storm out – 'cause that's the thing about *Billy*. He's unpredictable. And he knows it puts Harrington on edge, *likes* that it does.

Every time they've fought during the last two months, where in that space of time Steve seemed to have gotten real comfortable with him, Steve had mostly just stood and waited it out, 'cause who the fuck knew if Billy was gonna bowl him over or just laugh it off, spitting something about *King Steve*. It wasn't like Billy even fucking knew, so how the fuck could Harrington?

He doesn't know what to do right now, what he wants. He wants a blowjob, sure, but that's just most of the time.

He wants Harrington to be *his*, wants to be back in California. And that's just story of his fucking life – he can't have them both, or either it feels like sometimes. It'd be easy enough to pack his shit up and just drive. It'd take a few days but it'd be fucking worth it. He hates that if he really wanted to, if he really *could*, he could be back home in less than a week.

It'd be harder to convince Steve to go with him though, and he didn't like the idea of leaving him behind as much as he had a couple months ago. Fucking Hawkins. No – fucking *Indiana*. He doesn't understand why Harrington insists on staying. It's not like he's got family tying him here, or any real good friends, 'cause *fuck* Tommy, and that bitch Nancy too – and no, it wasn't like those fucking kids counted. He gets that he cares about them, has had to understand that over the past few weeks of Harrington willingly driving them everywhere, stocking his kitchen with shit that only they would eat ('cause who else other than chaotic fourteen-year-olds would happily eat Pop-Tarts and Jello?) and letting them call him at ridiculous hours of the morning.

It'd be easier to shove him in the trunk of his car and not let him out 'til they reached Las Vegas. And he can't lie; he's been fucking tempted to try lately.

He figures those kids'd probably notice that their babysitter slash mother-figure was suddenly missing pretty damn quick though.

He crowds Harrington until his calves hit the bed. "I know it was Wheeler," he snaps. "Don't lie to me."

Steve's face falls before he can steel himself. "She was just worried about something." He shrugs, dismissive despite the trepidation in his voice.

Billy rolls his eyes and places a hand on Steve's chest, just pushing a little. "And I know you still want her."

It doesn't matter that he's the one pushing Steve, snarling in his face, 'cause there's something cold in his chest, heavy, something that had been burning just before, warmed by Steve's hands. He grits his teeth.

"Of course I don't-"

He shoves him onto his back on the bed. "*Don't lie to me,*" he hisses, standing over him.

Steve glares up at him, fists tightening in the covers. "What do you want me to say?" He yells. "What do you want me to say? That, yeah, I still love her? That she's one of my best friends?" He sits up, scowling viciously. "That you can be a fucking asshole when you want to be? What do you want from me, Billy?"

Isn't that just it, though? What *does* he want?

God, he wanted it all. But what did *Steve* want? At this point, Billy was more than ready to follow him to fucking Arkansas and back. He doesn't want to leave him behind, doesn't want him to go anywhere without him, but Steve probably wants things too. Billy just doesn't know what they are.

Steve had nearly fucking *died*. Billy still couldn't wrap his head around that. What if he had? What is Billy supposed to do when he is gone – when he decides he's had enough, when he meets some girl, or that Nancy chick decides to come running back? Billy knows he's still hung up on her, and he sees it every day that he could never be enough for him, just like how Harrington could never fill that void in him. How could he?

"I want you to stop acting like a little bitch, Harrington," he snarls in

Steve's face before backing off, reaching for his jeans – what else is he supposed to do?

“Where are you going? Billy-”

“Fuck off.” He throws the door open and hears Steve scramble off the bed to follow him before he turns on his heel, leaning in close to hiss, “You think I need to tell you anything? You were just an easy lay, Harrington. Don't get so attached. No wonder Wheeler left when she got the chance.”

He watches the words sink in, watches something shrivel and die in Steve's eyes right there before he leaves.

He almost regrets it by the time he's made it to his car.

~

It's midnight by the time he's given up on sleep. He tells himself that it doesn't mean shit that he'd chosen the diner to park outside. He can see the booth where he and Steve had sat just last week through the window despite the darkness. The parking lot is empty, quiet and he feels like he can't breathe.

What the fuck is he supposed to do now? He figures that digging his own graves must count as one of his hobbies by now for how much he does it.

The thought of California lingers in his mind. He misses home. He misses the sofa with the god-awful orange cushions that his mom had chosen out, the shadow where the cross his dad had taken down had been before she'd died. The smell of the ocean that would drift in through the windows. The sunlight, his old bed, his neighbour's dog, the way his dad used to be, his mom, trips to the beach. *Fuck.*

He remembers his aunt, the one they'd to drove down to visit in Santa Fe the summer before the diagnosis.

It'd cost around a hundred bucks for him to get his own one-way ticket. It isn't long before he's thinking of every possible way he can

find the money. Just yesterday, he'd been thinking of all the ways he could try and get Harrington to come with him, any way he could've been happy staying.

The diner had opened sometime within the past hour and he leans against the side of the Camaro, lighting a cigarette when he spots a familiar shock of red hair through one of the windows. Max, Sinclair and the rest of the dorky kids she'd befriended over the last few months are all sat at one of the booths. He rolls his eyes after a minute of watching Sinclair make moon-eyes every time he looks at Max, stubbing out his cigarette with a sigh.

He heads inside. It doesn't matter that he pretends he hadn't seen her yet 'cause Max is at his side within seconds of getting through the door. "Hey. Do you have a dollar?"

He fishes in his jacket before finding a crumpled note in his jeans and handing it over.

He orders a strawberry shake and saunters over, grinning when Wheeler's brother scowls at him. "What's he doing here?"

"Hiding from Steve," the kid with the cap shrugs.

"I'm not fucking- What the fuck do you know?" He sits opposite some kid he doesn't think he's seen before, glowering. He reaches across the table and snatches his fries, smiling a little viciously when he's just met with wide eyes.

"You were sleeping in your car." Max shoots him a look that says *just give it up already*. "You've been sleeping at his place a lot, lately." She grabs a couple of his stolen fries.

"Steve said you were an asshole, but not like, last-November kind of asshole. So," Henderson shrugs again.

"What, does he just tell you everything now? Or did you hear it from Nancy? I'd bet he bitched to her all hours of the night."

"Are you just an asshole about everything?" Wheeler snarls, throwing his hands against the table indignantly. "Or are you just looking for someone's face to fuck up?" He looks pointedly at Sinclair who seems

to be mulling his words over.

“Like I was actually gonna hit a kid,” he scowls. “*And*, I fucking apologised for that – *months* ago,” he exclaims defensively, gesturing toward Lucas.

“It doesn’t matter if you *apologised*. You still did it.”

“It does matter.” He hears the quiet kid pipe up. “Do you remember when you got in the habit of stealing my lunch in third grade? You apologised.”

He looks a little startled at the kid who’s technically supposed to be on his side. “He’s *still* an asshole, Will. It’s probably only a matter of time before he beats Steve half to death again.” Wheeler snaps.

Billy rolls his eyes, *like that isn’t an overreaction*, but the memory of smashing a plate over Steve’s head last year still unsettles him. The idea of doing it again, now, makes something cold curl in his stomach.

“Steve is friends with him.” Max and Dustin share a look at that that Billy sure as fucking Hell doesn’t miss. “He makes his own decisions. So it’s not our problem.”

“I like you, kid.” He slides over Will’s fries and takes Wheeler’s instead. The kid smiles.

Wheeler looks like he’s gonna throw a fit but Dustin cuts in, “It doesn’t matter if he’s Steve’s *friend* or not.” Something about the way Henderson says *friend* has him narrowing his eyes. “He’s our friend.”

He sighs, pulling his fingers through his hair. “I’m not looking to hurt him,” he admits, guarded.

“Didn’t sound like he was fine last night.” Billy was two seconds away from telling Henderson he shrugged too much before he realised he didn’t have an answer, and could only shrug himself.

Max elbows him to get his attention. “He said you want to go back to California. That you’ve been thinking about it.” She hesitates for a second. “And that you asked him too.”

Billy's lip curls, dismissive. "Not all of us can have a reason to stay in this shithole of a town."

He'd have to be blind not to notice the subtle way Max leaned toward Sinclair, as if she wasn't even thinking about it. He could feel that familiar fucking warmth practically seeping from the kid as he shifted beside her, placing his hand cautiously on her arm.

"You could."

His eyes snap toward hers then as he jolts bodily in his seat. He hates that there's something knowing in her eyes. It'd been there last week when he'd picked her up from Wheeler's house, standing next to Steve as he waited for Dustin, sharing a cigarette. It'd been there two months ago when she'd knocked on Steve's door too, asking for him, as if she knew exactly where he'd be, that it was somewhere he actually *wanted* to be, saying his dad had asked her to bring him back.

He'd seen it, not understanding it for what it was, a year ago, after she'd forgot to knock, finding him somewhat suspiciously close to Jacob, a guy from his class. He'd mistaken it for judgement, hadn't understood that it was realisation, and possibly a little shock. He'd misunderstood it when he'd yelled, taken it out on her, had acted like his goddamn *father*.

He hadn't cared enough to realise at Jacob's funeral, had been too busy kicking the shit out of the fucker that'd actually had the nerve to turn up; hadn't cared after either, just that he needed to *get this thing out of him*.

He narrows his eyes at her, jaw tight. *What do you know?*

She averts her eyes, tongue darting out to wet her lips apprehensively.

She relents, almost guiltily, after a painful strung-out moment. "I suspected."

All the breath in his lungs is released at once, heavy and thick like smoke. He buries his face in a hand, uses the other to sip at his milkshake. He quickly abandons the straw with a bitter exhale of a laugh after some deliberation.

“What?” Sinclair is – thankfully – none the wiser.

Wheeler and Will seem just as confused, although Henderson meets Max’s gaze with a knowing look. He ducks his head under Billy’s subsequent glare.

“Last week,” she sighs, “you picked me up from the arcade.”

“Yeah. And?” He snaps.

She raises her eyebrows at him and flicks his arm. When he doesn’t respond she pinches the sleeve of his jacket between her fingers and tugs, giving him a pointed look. He shakes her off and looks down at his sleeve. There’s nothing on his jacket, or anything that screams *I’m fucking gay*, so to speak. There’s nothing off about it other than the fact that it reeks of fucking *Farrah Fawcett* ‘cause Steve is a finicky little shit, but it’s Steve’s jacket anyway, so it’s not like it’s strange for it to-

He blinks at her for a long moment before defiantly shrugging her off.

He remembers her eyes lingering on his jacket last week at the arcade when he hadn’t realised he’d pulled on Steve’s bomber instead of his in a rush to get out the door and had then refused to give it back, keeping it in his car where he’d found it strewn over the backseat last night. To be fair, he hadn’t seen his own jacket at Steve’s place since he’d left it.

“Wait,” Lucas turns to Henderson questioningly, “is this about... You know?” He makes an entirely unsubtle face and glances at Billy from the corner of his eye every few seconds. Dustin nods hesitantly, looking equally as confused.

“What the fuck, Max?” He barks.

“Since when did you figure it out?” She leans forward on her elbows, the corner of her mouth twitching into something dangerously close to a smile.

Sinclair shrugs, “Figure what out,” he averts his eyes, over conspicuous, at the same time that Wheeler cuts in, “It’s not exactly

like they're being subtle about it."

He buries his face in his hands. At least Will is completely out of the loop.

"*C'mon*, we sort of already knew. Like Mike said, you guys aren't exactly subtle. Plus, Steve, like, tells us everything, whether he means to or not." Dustin sips his milkshake loudly, as if Billy hadn't just been figured out by a bunch of fourteen year olds.

Billy rolls his eyes hard enough that he feels the strain of it like a momentary migraine. He also sort of really wants to *die* right now.

~

Billy doesn't know how exactly this became his life, but here he was, wishing he wasn't fucking living it.

Max elbows him again and he swears. "*Alright*, I'm fucking going." He bats her arm away, glaring in the mirror at Henderson who gives him a thumbs-up.

Before he can open the door and reluctantly drag himself out, Max grips him by the sleeve. "Don't forget these." He's then smacked in the face with the flowers she'd picked up, a petal in his eye and a thorn scraping his cheek.

He snatches them and considers beating her with them before slamming the door shut behind him. He can hear Sinclair snickering, muttering something to Wheeler who's got a lapful of a still-bewildered Will.

He's halfway up the drive when Max sticks her head out the window and yells, "Apologise properly." He sticks his middle finger up over his shoulder.

He reaches the door and considers just turning on his heel and leaving for a solid minute. Instead, he hurls the bouquet into the

neighbour's yard, a garish yellow projectile. He can practically hear Max sulking from the car.

When Steve answers the door a couple minutes later, he just blurts out, "I'm sorry," before he can eat his words.

There must have been something in his eyes that had said more than he ever would on the topic because Steve simply shrugs, seeming relieved. "You've said worse."

Steve doesn't look like he was expecting Billy to come back, or anybody for that matter. His hair is limp, falling in his face, and when Billy looks long enough, his face is suspiciously red. He's wearing one of Billy's t-shirts from the ever-growing pile of his clothes in Steve's bedroom. Last week, they hadn't been able to fully distinguish which shirt belonged to who unless it had been a polo or featured one of Billy's bands.

Steve smiles, raising an eyebrow, and despite how exhausted he looks, it's the best thing Billy's seen all day.

He sighs a little dramatically. "Well," he pauses, so suddenly unsure of himself in a way he doesn't think he's ever been. "What did you expect, *flowers*?"

Steve rolls his eyes. "I didn't expect an apology, I'll tell you that."

Billy just rolls his eyes, tries to roll with it despite the warm feeling that's budding in his chest and barges past Steve. "Come on." He curls a hand around the nape of his neck once he's half-closed the door behind them so they're out of sight, thumb rubbing slow circles into Steve's jaw. "Arcade, and then we can stop at Jenny's."

"Jenny from Chemistry?" Steve tugs on the jacket hanging over the end of the sofa uncertainly.

"Her parents are out of town for a few days so she's throwing this party."

Steve just laughs. "Billy, it's midday."

It takes a few moments for him to recognise the *Def Leppard* patch on

the shoulder of the jacket, to notice the way it seems just a little too big for Steve, how the denim is worn and reeks of the cologne Steve always bitches about.

He smirks, pulling Steve in close by the collar of *his* jacket. "I think we'll find a way to kill the time."

They make their way over to the car and Billy motions for Max to move. When she makes to sit on Sinclair's lap Billy snaps, "I don't think so."

Sinclair ends up on Henderson's lap instead. And even though Max had protested, she still smiles like she's trying not to burst into hysterical laughter until he kicks the lot of them out of his car once they're at the arcade.

That afternoon, parked on a deserted curb with Steve's mouth on his neck, he assures himself that he can wait a few days. He's almost sure he can convince Steve to come by the end of the week. He has to.

They end up being ridiculously late to the party and aren't even seen for the entire night except for Billy maintaining his record as the Keg King. He almost tells Jenny in the morning that *you have a really nice bathroom, I'm sorry I spent most of the night fucking Steve Harrington in there and drank most of your beer*, but he doesn't really feel bad about it.